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BERLIN. Legere sends.

Last night about twenty Soviet tanks ~~were~~ moved into concealed area off Unter den Linden where they remained. At Berlin Task Force meeting ~~this morning~~ Kohler very nervous about ~~possibility~~ of further US MP-armed escorts, one more of which will probably take place today. Kohler believes ~~that~~ presence of Soviet tanks a few blocks from Friedrichstrasse plus certain isolated phrases in Soviet Commandant's recent replies to protests indicate we have flushed out Soviets on ~~matter of~~ their continuing responsibility East Berlin. He added that even if Friedrichstrasse were closed, any tank probe action was ruled out because of strongly negative UK position presented Ambassadorial Group yesterday, and seemed rather grateful for this UK position, noting: "This is not an issue on which we wish to become engaged." Nitze noted that, although McNamara did not agree, ^{apparently} [the] JCS feels that changing probe procedure now, under pressure and in ~~the~~ wake ~~of~~ Ambassador Thompson's demarche in Moscow, would be worst possible time.

Kohler felt [that] even physical closing Friedrichstrasse would not materially alter situation, although [he said] without being contradicted [is said] that our acceptance of physical closure would erode ~~remaining approxi-~~ ^{remains, if any} ~~entately 15 percent of our~~ ^{continues} position concerning free ~~access~~ within Berlin.

Prospect is for some State-Defense consultation this afternoon, possibly tied in ¹⁷⁰⁰ [at 1700] to meeting with President on different subject. Meanwhile Dowling recommends continuing "probes" despite risks, and Lightner reports highly favorable reactions among Berlin political leaders and prominent journalists over firmness US position so far.